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homemakers' chat
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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Wednesday, February 3, 1943

Subject: "UNITED NATIONS' GROCERY" "Information from Food Distribution Administration officials of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

No single factor is more important in this fight for freedom than American food. Nourishing American food is putting energy into those swift tank attacks in the African Desert. It is backing up that courageous drive on the frigid steppes of Russia. Food from American farms and factories is traveling through dangerous sea lanes to our allies all over the globe at the rate of 5 million dollars a day.-

The U. S. Department of Agriculture acts as grocer for the United Nations. Since the beginning of the Lend-Lease program, less than two years ago the Department has bought over one and a half billion dollars worth of American food for shipment to our allies. That sounds like a lot of food, doesn't it? In fact, it sounds so big that some people are saying they are afraid we Americans will go hungry ourselves if we don't stop shipping so much overseas. But, that is far from the truth. Our Lend-Lease exports have been small in relation to our total food supply. Take butter, for instance. Less than one percent of our total production for 1942 was sent to our allies. And..here are some other figures: Four percent of our canned goods, a little over 9 percent of our eggs, 5 percent of our milk, 13 percent of our pork and less than one-half of one percent of our beef and veal went to our allies last year. However, this food, although it amounted to only a drop in the bucket, kept our friends in the fight while we were building strength. The Secretary of Agriculture, summed it up in one of his recent talks when he said, "England turned to us for food..so did Russia, and if we had not been able to meet the call, Hitler might have triumphed long ago."

You homemakers accustomed to buying groceries for your families will readily understand that filling grocery lists which run into millions of dollars is a big

job. It takes planning...and planning in advance. In many instances Lend-Lease purchases are made a whole year in advance. The allied nations have food missions located in Washington working closely with officials of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. They discuss how much food their country will need,...what the shipping schedules will be and how much space the food will require,..how the food is going to be used, and other necessary information before purchases or arrangements for purchases are made through regualr packers and distributors. Because space is precious, they must anticipate sailing dates...and must arrange for the food to be there to fill the ships. This is making it necessary to build up stockpiles and reserves which can move at a moment's notice.

Shipping space also is having much to do with the kind of food we are sending. So that foods will travel small and light and will not spoil, we're taking extra water out of it...heating it out...drying it out...blowing it out. Take oranges, for instance. We're evaporating the excess water, leaving in most all the vitamins and good flavor, of course, and sending the juice to our allies as a rich, golden syrup. When they receive it, all they need to do is add water...and presto they have orange juice again. Just think...by taking the excess water out of oranges one ship can do the work of 9. And we're sending milk, one of the most perishable of all foods, on long voyages. We're making powder out of it. To date we have sent millions of pounds and not a bit has spoiled. We're drying the water out of carrots, beets, cabbage, onions, potatoes, spinach and many other vegetables, cutting down their weight one-tenth to one-twentieth...yet they lose none of their flavor and food value. When they arrive overseas, all that is necessary to get them ready to cook is to add water. They come out of the pot looking as if they had been gathered from the garden that day.

English and Russian homemakers are now buying American eggs. They're getting powdered eggs in 5-ounce packages which equal one dozen eggs in the shell. Another

Lend-Lease food that is going over in a big way with our allies is called "pork and soya links"...much like our own pork sausage, except it is made from ground pork and soya flour. In many places people use soya flour and grits to supplement meat. One of the most interesting soybean products we are sending to Russia is a quick-cooking cereal made of rolled oats, soya flakes, dry skim milk, sugar and salt. It comes pretty close to being a complete meal in itself since it is rich in protein, vitamins and minerals. And we are sending some foods that are entirely new to us... prepared for foreign tastes. One of them is called Toshonka...a mixture of pork, bay leaves, onions, pepper and salt...for the Russian soldiers.

Two other items that we are sending overseas in large quantities are seeds and synthetic vitamins...seeds of all kinds to replant gardens and fields overrun by Hitler's panzer divisions...vitamins in concentrated form to supplement starvation diets.

Next year probably 25 percent of our food must go to our allies and armed forces. We here at home will have to get along with what is left. That means careful managing in every kitchen in America. Not a bit of food must go to waste.

You will have less of some foods, more of others. You will rely upon fresh foods whenever you can and leave cans for shipment overseas. You will buy some foods in bulk which you used to buy in cans. But if everyone does his job, no one need go hungry. As Secretary Wickard says: "If we produce and conserve food to the limit of our ability, I am not worried about how things will turn out. We can meet our military requirements, help feed our allies, build up necessary reserves, and still have enough food to give good diets to people here at home. In fact, I believe that we may be able to improve the diets of some people in this country."

If you are interested in knowing more about the foods that America is sending to the United Nations, don't miss the story entitled "The World's Largest Grocery Store," in the December issue of MARKETING ACTIVITIES. Write to the U. S. Department of Agriculture for a copy.

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